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MARCH 1956

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

**WE CAN'T WIN
THE COLD WAR
WHAT ARE WE
ARMING FOR?**

THE EDITORS

KONNI ZILLIACUS

FROM PARIS TO PEKING TO NEW YORK

PAUL M. SWEEZY

VOL. 7

11

Socialists and Elections

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEEZY

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

How agreeable it would be if one could run a radical publishing enterprise without everlasting financial headaches! Some times we allow ourselves the relaxation of a little fantasy: there would be no cramping space limitations; we would hire full time a half dozen or so top-notch journalists and social scientists and editors who are out of work or eking out an existence selling gadgets; we would add a book section which could become an outlet for constructive criticism for younger scholars all over the country; a reader's forum would provide a medium for constant interchange of reader ideas and opinions; and so on.

Oh well, maybe some day. But just now the reality is less agreeable. Printing costs have just gone up again for the nth time, and the commercial press continues its strict boycott of Harvey O'Connor's *The Empire of Oil*, a book which ought to have a really big sale and bring in much-needed revenue to its publishers. If we keep returning to the latter subject, it is because we think you can help us do something about it. In fact, we know you can. Here is the proof, in a series of communications from one faithful subscriber: "I just want to let you know that following your suggestion in the January

(continued on inside back cover)

WE CAN'T WIN THE COLD WAR

Ever since World War II, the aims of American foreign policy have been to divide the world sharply into Communist and anti-Communist sectors, to mobilize and arm the anti-Communist camp, and eventually to destroy the Communists or at least force them back into a permanent position of hopeless inferiority.

After ten years of it, there can be no doubt whatever that this policy has been history's most grandiose failure.

The Communist camp has grown enormously—in size, strength, self-confidence, political maturity. The vast segment of mankind that inhabits the backward countries of the world is less and less inclined to join, or remain in, anyone's camp. And now there are unmistakable signs that even the core of the anti-Communist coalition, the tight alliance of the Western Big Three, is beginning to disintegrate from within. The Middle Eastern crisis is paralyzing the Anglo-American partnership (of this the completely negative outcome of the Eisenhower-Eden talks is the most eloquent testimony), and the Algerian rebellion is at long last confronting France with a choice from which there is no escape: either move decisively Left and hence away from the Big Three alliance or sink into a state of impotent chaos.

American foreign policy, in short, has failed in the most literal and straightforward sense. Not only has it not achieved its aims, but events have been moving, and with increasing speed, in precisely the opposite direction.

Under the circumstances, one would naturally expect a critical reassessment of the situation in responsible quarters. Perhaps something of the sort is going on behind closed doors—at any rate one hopes so. But there is no sign of it in public. The most authoritative spokesmen of the opposition party—supposedly the well-spring of constructive criticism under our system of government—cut a truly pitiful figure. Former President Truman querulously complains that when he was in charge he made the Republicans co-responsible but that they now want a monopoly on disaster. And Senator Jackson, with almost macabre irrelevance, solemnly insists that our only hope is to put ourselves in a position to blow up the world before the Soviet Union can do it.*

* Not that the Senator from Washington thinks it's much of a hope. In his Senate speech of February 1st, Mr. Jackson, perhaps carried away by

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The Democrats are, of course, more willing than the Republicans to admit the defeats and setbacks of the last few years, but they have nothing to offer but the through-the-looking-glass prescription of "more of the same"—as though a man who is already sick from drinking poison can cure himself by doubling the dose.

Why this stubborn adherence to a bankrupt and ruinous policy? Why is there no intelligent discussion, no criticism worthy of the name, no serious proposal of alternatives? We believe that these are the most important questions facing the American Left today. This is true in a double sense: the questions can be answered only on the basis of a genuine understanding of our society, and only if the answers are known can effective action be undertaken.

The central point that has to be hammered home again and again, indeed that cannot be overemphasized, is that America's course in world affairs is not, as many liberals seem to think, a mere matter of delusion or misunderstanding or error. It is often argued that the anti-Communist obsession which dominates our whole national life, both foreign and domestic, is like a fever which seizes the patient, transports him to a world of hallucinations, and renders him incapable of rational thought or action. Once the fever passes, the patient recovers his senses and goes about his business as usual. Similarly, so the argument runs, we shall get over our collective obsession with Communism, and we shall then see the foolishness of the policies based upon it.

Unfortunately, it isn't quite so simple. The analogy breaks down because the sick man has no interest in preserving the fever and the delusions that go with it; on the contrary, he has every interest in getting rid of them. Not so in the case of capitalist United States. The anti-Communist obsession is the indispensable ideological foundation of the cold war and the witch hunt, and these in turn are the essential ingredients of a total situation which is extremely satisfactory to the American ruling class. It is hard for some of us to realize just how satisfactory the situation is to the Big Boys because we can see so clearly its negative and destructive sides. But we must make the effort. We must grasp the full significance of a statement such as that made by Thomas B. McCabe, President of the Scott Paper Company and former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, in a speech to the annual convention of the Investment Bankers Association of America on December 1, 1955. "The high prosperity we are enjoying today, this extraordinary prosperity," he told the assembled

his own eloquence, declaimed: "Neither do I maintain that superiority in the ballistic missile field [toward which the whole speech was directed] will assure our national survival. In fact, I believe the very opposite." This at any rate is the way the *New York Times* reported it. Logic, like consistency it would seem, is a vice of small minds.

bankers, "is being attained in a period when *the social, economic, and political climate is almost ideal.*"* (Emphasis added.)

From the point of view of those for whom Mr. McCabe speaks, an ideal *social* climate is one in which the mass of the people, preoccupied with cultivating their own gardens, look up with the proper awe and respect to the business and military elite whom God in His infinite wisdom has chosen to lead the nation. An ideal *economic* climate is one in which profits are astronomical and the loftiest ambition of any man is to make his pile. An ideal *political* climate is one in which good old Ike sits reassuringly in the White House while the rest of the government passes out the goodies to the hungry corporations.

We have all these things today, and make no mistake about it, we have them because of the cold war and the witch hunt. Profits, and employment too, are directly dependent on the arms and foreign-aid programs; would-be dissenters are kept on the straight and narrow by the threat of losing jobs and social position; one-time New Dealers are cowed into silence or conformity by lying charges of treason. And the public at large, or at any rate a disconcertingly large part of it, has actually been persuaded or tricked or bludgeoned into accepting the necessity of making any kind of sacrifice, up to and including that of life itself, to protect us all from the hellish plots and machinations which are supposed to be threatening our very existence.

The end of the cold war and the witch hunt would, of course, change all that. We should be back again where we were in the 1930s, face to face with the real problems of capitalism—not only the wastes and injustices and stupidities of the system but also its inherent inability to make anything like full use of society's productive resources for the human needs of its members. And the public at large would doubtless resume the search, interrupted with the outbreak of World War II, for a solution to these problems consistent with its own workaday interests in peace, security, and the welfare of generations on the way and to come. Those of us who are old enough to have lived through those days know that the climate *was* very different then. And we also know that it was a climate which distinctly did *not* appeal to Mr. McCabe and his friends as ideal. They do not want to return to it, and they know in their heart of hearts that the alternative is to keep on with the cold war and the witch hunt.

One has only to add that it is these people and others like them all over the country who control the media of mass communication

* How well this speech was received may be judged from the fact that it was published and distributed, under the title "No Limit on Tomorrow," as a pamphlet by Drexel & Co. (historically the Philadelphia branch of J. P. Morgan & Co.) which is the source from which we quote.

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and dominate both Republican and Democratic Parties, to understand why it is that the United States hews to a foreign policy line which leads from one defeat to another. One might almost say that the purpose served lies altogether outside the realm of international affairs; it is to sustain that ideal social, economic, and political climate so dear to the hearts of the powers that be. And for *this* purpose, paradoxical as it may sound, losing a cold war is much more serviceable than finding a way to peace and international security.

To be sure, no one *likes* to lose. It goes against the national grain, and this is perhaps more true of the United States, which has never tasted defeat in a shooting war, than it is of other countries with longer and more varied histories. If the American people understood the real situation, as the Big Boys of course do (they are neither blind nor stupid), they would certainly be profoundly shocked; and their injured national pride could be expected to lead, sooner or later, to political questioning and reassessment. How far matters would go and what the eventual outcome might be no one can say, but at any rate we would be entering a strange land with an unknown climate.

If this analysis is sound, it explains much that otherwise seems mysterious. The architects of American policy and the makers of American opinion—the same group, due allowance being made for specialization and division of labor—have two not easily reconcilable tasks to perform simultaneously. They must justify the cold war, which requires that the dangers and threats to which we are exposed should be depicted as frighteningly real. On the other hand, they cannot admit the truth, that the United States is rapidly and decisively *losing* the cold war, for that would bring their whole policy into question. It follows that at the very same time that they are scaring the daylights out of us, they must also reassure us that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, we are really doing fine and in the long run are sure to emerge triumphant.

This duality pervades and permeates American ruling-class thought and propaganda. It manifests itself in a thousand different forms, often in the very same person (for example, Mr. Dulles), sometimes even in the same speech or article. Almost any day's newspaper will furnish examples, though few as striking as the *New York Times* of February 2nd which carried extensive excerpts from Senator Jackson's speech on ballistic missiles on one page and on another the full text of the so-called "Declaration of Washington" which was issued at the conclusion of the Eisenhower-Eden talks. Here, juxtaposed, are passages from these two high level pronouncements. First, Senator Jackson:

Seven years ago, we had a monopoly of both atomic bombs

and planes for delivering them against distant targets. Today, both monopolies are gone. . . .

Up to now we have had one reassurance. So far we have managed to win every race of discovery for crucial new weapons systems. . . .

However, Mr. President, I believe that the Soviets may win the race for the intermediate-range 1,500-mile ballistic missile. . . .

Soviet victory in this race would be shattering to the morale of our allies, and to our own self-confidence. For the first time Moscow would have beaten us in a crucial scientific-industrial race. No longer would America be acknowledged as the unquestioned industrial and technical colossus of the world. Our trump card would have passed to the Kremlin, and the reverberating effects on our relationships abroad would be incalculable.

And now Messrs. Eisenhower and Eden:

We will not be deflected from the policies and purposes we have herein stated. On the contrary, we will maintain and, where necessary, strengthen and extend them. Thus, we shall help ourselves and others to peace, freedom and social progress, maintaining human rights where they are already secure, defending them when they are in peril and peacefully restoring them where they have been temporarily lost.

While resolutely pursuing these aims, which are the products of our faith in God and in the peoples of the earth, we shall eagerly grasp any genuine opportunity to free mankind of the pall of fear and insecurity which now obscures what can and should be a glorious future.

On the one hand: we are mortally threatened, the outlook for the future is gloomy indeed. On the other hand: we are serenely and confidently pursuing policies which will lead to a glorious future of peace, freedom, and abundance. It is no accident that the pessimistic point of view is represented by a Democrat and the optimistic by a Republican, though this should not be misinterpreted. The difference is not one of party principle or doctrine but of relation to power. The party that for the time being occupies the White House and must therefore assume public responsibility for foreign policy has to put the best face upon things, while it is to the interest of the outs to paint the situation in somber colors. There thus arises a natural division of labor in the hard but richly rewarding task of persuading the American people to keep on waging a hopeless struggle.

For it is hopeless, and it is this fact that gives us of the Left an absolutely crucial role to play in the period ahead.

It is now widely, perhaps almost universally, agreed that in a period of nuclear bombs and ballistic missiles no country can hope

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to win a hot war in any meaningful sense of the word. It is less generally recognized, but no less true, that no country can win a cold war either. The basic reason is that while the objective of cold war must be to win friends and isolate enemies, the very act of waging it repels friends and makes more enemies. *Waging a cold war and winning a cold war are thus mutually exclusive.* Or, to put the matter the other way around, the only possible way to achieve the *objective* of cold war is to renounce the *method* of cold war. Competitive coexistence is no longer an ideal, still less a utopian dream, it is a practical necessity for any nation that wants to retain its prestige and power in the international community.

The Russians have understood this, and their policies are prospering. We have not, and our policies are failing.

The responsibility for our blindness and failure rests squarely on the shoulders of a ruling class which prefers to promote its own conception of an ideal social, economic, and political climate to facing the truth and taking the consequences. Not for the first time in history the real interests of a nation are being sold out for the temporary interests of its ruling class.

But, as always in such cases, the game cannot go on forever. Truth, like murder, will out. And when it does, it is a power that can shake the world. We of the American Left have the duty and privilege to see that that time comes sooner rather than later, before rather than after our country suffers the humiliation and disgrace of total defeat in a cold war which never should have been launched and never could be won.

(February 12, 1956)

THE WISDOM OF THE EAST

"We need not assume that leaders in Asian countries . . . are readily duped by false promises." Mr. Dulles, December 8, 1955.

"Do not trust him, gentle Asian,"
Leaders of the Free World say;
"Turn deaf ears to his persuasion,
Communists your trust betray.
With disinterested sincerity,
We can give you true prosperity!
Freedom guard for your posterity,
Walk the democratic way!"

THE WISDOM OF THE EAST

"Do not trust him, gentle Burman,"
Warns the welcome Soviet guest;
"You are looked upon as vermin
By the capitalist West.
Spurn the bounty of plutocracy,
Spearhead of so-called democracy!
Bourgeois friendship is hypocrisy,
Listen not to his request!"

Ideologic animosity
Aid to backward regions brings,
While high hopes of reciprocity
Double goodwill offerings.
But the Asian, mild and gentle,
Steeped in wisdom oriental,
With composure monumental
Takes the aid without the strings.

Benefactors idealistic,
Moved by pure philanthropy,
For assistance altruistic
Small return as yet can see.
While they find a neutral attitude
In the South East Asian latitude—
"There is no such thing as gratitude"
So they say "for charity!"

Asian leaders uncommitted,
On the fence prefer to stay;
By both rivals benefitted,
One against the other play.
"Aid's a bid for popularity,
Aid's a bribe for solidarity.
"There is no such thing as charity!"
So the backward Asians say.

—Sagittarius

*Man cannot make peace and prepare for war at the same time
any more than he can simultaneously support and oppose revolutions.*
—American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth To Power*.

WHAT ARE WE ARMING FOR?

BY KONNI ZILLIACUS

In the Eisenhower-Eden Declaration of Washington, these two great statesmen told the world that the arms race must go on, because "the society of free nations must retain the power needed to deter aggression."

"The Communist rulers," explains the Declaration, "have expressed in numerous documents and manifestoes their purpose to extend the practice of Communism by every possible means, until it encompasses the world. To this end they have used military and political force in the past. They continue to seek the same goals, and they have now added economic inducements to their other methods of penetration."

As presumably not even the authors of this pronouncement claim that they need H-bombs to deal with Communist "economic inducements" and "political force," the operative part of their declaration is the allegation that "Communist rulers" have used military force in the past and intend to do so in future, in order to "extend the practice of Communism . . . until it encompasses the world."

In saying this, the Washington Declaration exceeds even the high standard of mendacity tolerated in politicians. No member of the Soviet or any other Communist government has ever, in speech or writing, announced the intention of spreading Communism to other countries by force of arms. Neither has the Soviet or any other Communist government ever used military force for any such purpose.

Mr. George F. Kennan came much nearer the realities of the situation in his article in the *Reader's Digest* of March 1950: "Stalinist doctrine," he pointed out, "does not demand war. On the contrary, it teaches that eventually capitalism will fall largely of its own weight, i.e., as a result of the inner 'contradictions' which the Communists believe it embodies. They see the role of Communism as hastening the collapse of capitalism and assisting, as a midwife, at the birth of the Socialist order." But they "regard this as primarily the task of the native Communists in each country, and not of the Soviet Red Army. There is nothing in the Stalinist doctrine that would make it necessarily the main responsibility of the armed forces of the Soviet Union themselves to overthrow capitalism everywhere by direct military action. This premise would actually seem illogical

The author, a British Labor MP and leading expert on foreign affairs, is a frequent contributor to MR.

and improper, from the Communist point of view; for it would imply that capitalism in the absence of such an attack, would be basically sound and capable of coping with its own basic 'contradictions.' But this is exactly what good Marxists do not believe."

Mr. Kennan goes on to examine Russian national traditions and the interests of the Soviet state as viewed by the Soviet leaders. Neither, he says, gives any warrant for attributing aggressive designs to the Soviet Government. He concludes: "Viewed against the background of doctrine, tradition and practical realities . . . it is hardly likely that the Russians are now charting an early military onslaught on the Western world. . . . Political expansionism by means short of war has been the real Soviet program since the conclusion of World War II. During this period the Soviet Government has not taken one inch of land by outright military aggression."

This view of the facts of history has been recently confirmed from a somewhat unexpected source. Speaking at Philadelphia on January 17th, Vice President Nixon complained that "since World War II the Communist conspiracy has added 600,000,000 people and a quarter of the earth's territory to the area which it dominates. The significant fact about this accomplishment is that the gains were made without the loss of a single Russian soldier in combat."

His words were almost an echo of Winston Churchill's remark in the House of Commons more than five years ago: "The years that have followed our victory have brought enormous increases of power and territory to Soviet Russia. In one form or another they have gained control of half Europe and all China without losing a single Russian soldier." (November 30, 1950.) Churchill added that there was no reason to believe that the Soviet government was planning aggression against the West.

Even that Russian-roulette-with-hell-bombs player Mr. John Foster Dulles, in a rare, brief, and no doubt deeply regretted moment of lucidity, has testified to the same effect. On March 8, 1949, he told the Third National Conference on Churches and the World Order:

So far as it is humanly possible to judge, the Soviet government, under conditions now prevailing, does not contemplate the use of war as an instrument of its national policy. I do not know any responsible high official, military or civilian, in this government or any government, who believes that the Soviet government now plans conquest by open military aggression.

On December 15th last, Mr. Dulles both contradicted his own past testimony and revealed what the Western powers are really afraid of, when he told the NATO conference in Paris that he "perceived no Soviet tendency to return to policies of 'direct action' which

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characterized Communist behavior in the decade following World War II. . . . Instead, the Soviet threat now appeared to be indirect political and economic threat aimed at aggrandizement in the Near and Middle East and in Southeast Asia. . . . Mr. Dulles described Soviet technique as one designed to develop emotionalism and hate, then to reinforce the Soviet position by offering technical assistance, arms and aid." (From the United States Information Service Wireless Bulletin.)

"What we must realize today," insisted Vice President Nixon in the January 17th speech already quoted, "is that sinister new means have been developed by the Communists for taking over countries without ever launching armed aggression. . . . The major danger the free world faces today is not defeat in hot war but defeat in cold war—and a cold war in which potential enemies undeterred by any moral restraint use political, economic, psychological and other tactics which are just as effective in taking over territory as armed aggression—and much less costly. This is the way the Communist nations operate."

One of the most interesting and instructive pleas for the Anglo-American cold war and arms race policy was that made by Minister of State Anthony Nutting in London on January 25th. He too claimed that "for several years after the war . . . Communism pursued its end by open aggression, by direct and violent assault," but that "after Stalin's death the Soviet Government adopted subtler methods." It went in for "competitive co-existence." That was the new and really deadly danger. The military danger was still real and increasing. The only way to end it was through an agreement on disarmament. But

in a sense this problem of the military threat is rather easier to solve than some other aspects of the Communist menace. For at least it is no more to Russia's advantage than to ours to blow the human race to bits. Therefore there is some element of common interest if not yet of actual compulsion in a Disarmament Agreement.

But the problem is by no means so simple to resolve when it comes to political subversion and economic penetration. And in a world where the Great Powers have reached virtual saturation point in terms of potential nuclear destruction, it is in these political and economic spheres that the principal Communist threat now lies. . . . It may well be that Korea was the last shooting war in the history of our world. But it doesn't mean that we have finally defeated or even halted the advance of Communism.

When called upon to justify the allegation that in the first decade after the war the Soviet Government spread or tried to spread

Communism by "open aggression, by direct and violent assault" (Nutting), by "violence and threat of violence" and policies of "direct action" (Dulles), our rulers point to the 1950 Korean War, the 1948 *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia, the 1947 so-called Berlin blockade, the alleged enslavement of the East European Cominform states, the "partition" of Poland and Roumania, and the "annexation" of the Baltic states. An examination of the facts in each case shows that none of them could even plausibly be cited as an example of Soviet aggression. In every one of them, Western responsibility is as great and the Western record at least as bad as the responsibility and record of the Soviet Union.

In Korea, United States policy was from the beginning to treat as "appeasement" any attempt to negotiate a compromise with the North Korean "People's Front" Government that would have made possible an all-Korean provisional government that could hold free elections. Instead, the American military occupation authorities destroyed all Korean parties and organizations, including trade unions, that favored moderation and compromise, and established and propped up the bellicose, reactionary dictatorship of the aged fanatic Syngman Rhee. That left civil war as the only way to unite the country and made its outbreak sooner or later inevitable. When it duly began, the United States intervened on the side of its unsavory puppet, Syngman Rhee. Thanks to the flabbiness of the Labor government and the folly of the Soviet government in boycotting the Security Council, the United States Administration got away with treating its own military intervention on the reactionary side of the Korean civil war as a case of collective action against international aggression, and dragged Britain and other countries into the bloody mess. The moral halo of the United Nations was clapped on the beetle brows of American power politics for the better fooling of public opinion.

The Chinese government issued several warnings that an advance of American troops to the Manchurian frontier would be regarded by China as a threat to her security and force her to intervene. General MacArthur ignored the warnings and Mr. Attlee's anxious twitterings, and went ahead. He said he knew the Chinese and they were only bluffing. He turned out to be wrong.

The Americans, who treat any foreign intervention anywhere in the Western hemisphere as aggression against themselves (the Monroe Doctrine), have no right to object to the very limited and localized application of the same principle by the Chinese. In any case, they have been answered beforehand by Mr. Dulles: in his speech of March 8, 1949, already quoted, Mr. Dulles, after pointing out that the Soviet Union had not used and was not planning to

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use war as an instrument of national policy, went on to say: "It may be assumed [however] that the Soviet state would use the Red Army if its leaders felt that their homeland was imminently and seriously menaced. That is why . . . the United States should not seek military bases so close to the Soviet Union as to carry an offensive threat that is disproportionate to its defensive value."

That condemns MacArthur's invasion of North Korea, the use of Formosa as an American base, and United States readiness to fight for Quemoy and Matsu (with the added offense that Formosa, the Pescadores, Matsu and Quemoy are Chinese territories), as well as the bases on Russia's doorstep which are being set up under the Baghdad Pact. On Mr. Dulles' own showing, Britain and the United States are acting aggressively and provocatively in all these cases.

The *coup d'état* in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 was the work of the Czechoslovak Communist and Social Democratic Parties and the trade unions, aided by left-wing groups in other parties. The Soviet government did not, from start to finish, intervene in any way.

The crisis opened when, in the latter half of January, 12 ministers (half the Cabinet) other than the Social Democrats and Communists, resigned from the coalition government. Their main motive was fear of the success with which Czechoslovak parliamentary democracy was being used, albeit peacefully and constitutionally, to build a socialist society. They intended, in the words of the conservative, bitterly anti-Communist, London Catholic weekly, *The Tablet*, of March 6th, 1948, "there can be no doubt, to force the resignation of the whole Cabinet and to secure the formation of a new coalition without the Communists, as had been done in France and Italy."

They also hoped, not without encouragement from Washington, to follow in the footsteps of France and Italy by receiving American aid in return for moving decisively to the Right and re-consolidating the old social order. But they hopelessly miscalculated their strength and the temper of the people. For Benès was quickly compelled by huge armed street demonstrations under slogans such as "The revolution is in danger!", "Czechoslovakia will not be another Greece!", "Don't recall those who resigned!", to form a left-wing coalition government headed by the Communists.

All this brought home to me what a true prophet Benès had proved to be in our long talk nearly 18 months earlier, that is, in September 1946 (mark the date). He told me then that Czechoslovakia's unique experiment of a large, freely elected Communist Party heading the socialist reconstruction of the country by democratic means would succeed—on one condition, namely, that the great

powers who were allies in the war would be partners in peace. If they did that, he said, democracy and freedom would survive in Czechoslovakia. "But if they drift apart and treat each other as potential enemies, our compromise here will break down and we shall have to choose between the West and Russia. If so, we will choose the latter. Because if the Western powers quarrel with the Soviet Union, they will rearm Germany—and we do not want another Munich." Thus spoke President Benès in 1946!

It is just as wild a distortion of the truth to treat the so-called "Berlin blockade" as a case of Soviet aggression: from the end of the war United States policy had been directed to shoring up capitalism in West Germany and to opposing any form of German unification that might give the central government the power to nationalize industry. The United States wanted some kind of confederation loose enough to make social and economic policy a subject for "states' rights." The Labor government, after some brave words in the opposite sense, as usual toed the American line.

In pursuance of this policy, the United States introduced a new mark for West Germany, valued at one of the new for ten of the old marks. The old marks began to flow into East Germany, where they were still legal tender. The Russians saw that this influx would cause runaway inflation in the Soviet Zone (a contingency not unnoticed by, nor unwelcome to, the American authors of the financial reform). They accordingly forbade the introduction of currency from West Germany and asked their allies to agree to a control system being established on the boundary between the East and West zones. When this was refused, they closed the frontier. This cut Berlin off from the West. But the Russians offered to supply food and other necessities to the western sector in Berlin on the same scale as to their own. The Western powers preferred to institute the air-lift.

In the prolonged row that followed, the Russians were at least as reasonable and willing to accept the mediation offers of the United Nations as the Western powers, but that doesn't say much. Those are the facts about the so-called Berlin blockade.

In Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Soviet policy showed at least as much respect for the February, 1945, Yalta Agreement (tempered by Churchill's zones-of-influence agreement concluded in October 1944) as the Western powers. It was never responsible for as much bloodshed and misery, let alone reaction and social injustice, as were the British and Americans through their war of intervention in Greece. In the case of Poland, Roumania, and the Baltic States, the Russians were partly protecting themselves against Hitler and partly recovering possession of territories (to most, but not all, of which they had strong ethnic claims) that had been torn from them by armed West-

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ern intervention during the Revolution. This was no more aggressive than France's recovery of Alsace-Lorraine after the first world war.

On any objective and informed view, Soviet policy during and after World War II has made as many mistakes and been as ruthless and self-regarding as the policy of any other great power. But it has been solely concerned with the interests of the Soviet state, notably its defense and its trade. Sometimes the Soviet government has found the devotion to its cause of Communist Parties in other countries useful in promoting these interests. But at no time has it been willing to sacrifice or take risks with Soviet national interests in order to help Communist Parties in other countries. Its policy does not pursue ideological aims, because the Soviet Union ceased to be a revolutionary power many years ago—in fact, ever since Stalin defeated Trotsky on the issue of “socialism in one country” versus “permanent revolution.”

On the other hand, the Declaration of Washington, like the Eisenhower-Potomac Charter of June 28, 1954, to which it refers, the British Defense White Paper of March 1955, and the SEATO Treaty, make it perfectly clear that the Republican Administration and their British Tory stooges cling with blind obstinacy to their policy of anti-Communist liberation. This is an interventionist and aggressive policy, sold to the public as defensive. It makes peaceful coexistence impossible and war in the end inevitable—as the same policy produced the utterly unnecessary second World War.

A glance at their record before the war helps in understanding what the Western powers are up to today. For they are pursuing the same policy, on a bigger scale and with even more portentous results, and selling it to the public on the same prettexts.

Thus in the thirties, the policy of appeasing and conniving at the arming of Hitler as a “bulwark against Communism” was justified by the same arguments, couched in the same language, as the arming of West Germany today. But at that time the Soviet Union had entered the League of Nations and was doing its desperate and unavailing best to persuade the besotted class warriors in the West to join in an alliance to stop Hitler before it was too late to avert a world war.

In the 20s, when Germany was brought into the Western camp through the Locarno Treaties (the Western European Union of those days), there was the same talk about the “external danger” emanating from revolutionary Russia that menaced Western civilization, and of the need to enlist Germany in “the defense of Europe against Asiatic Communism” (Lord Dabernon). But in those days no one even pretended that there was any danger of the Soviet Union attacking and invading the West—the allegation would have been too

patently ridiculous.

Earlier still, and you get right back to Allied counter-revolutionary intervention in Russia. Even then, believe it or not, while the Western powers were invading Russia and trying to strangle the Revolution in its cradle and drown it in blood, they claimed to be fighting in self-defense. They went one better and protested fervently that they were not taking sides in Russian internal affairs or favoring counter-revolution!

To say that Western capitalist policy toward revolutionary Russia from 1917 until today, with a partial interlude during World War II, has been based on fraud and force, and sold to the public by a campaign of tremendous and sustained lying, is true, but does not go far enough. For in this case the lie in the mind springs from a lie in the soul: by definition, the defenders of the existing social order believe there is nothing much wrong with it, no need for fundamental change, and no alternative to capitalism but "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." Therefore they cannot accept the idea that serious challenges to the social or colonial order may arise for valid "internal" reasons, or that anything good can come from them. They believe they must be due to infiltration and subversion by foreign agents, and that they must be suppressed at all costs.

Hence the great Tory syllogism: "Social and colonial unrest is Communism. Communism is Soviet aggression. Therefore self-defense (or defense against Soviet aggression, or the Communist conspiracy, or defense of the free world, democracy, religion and what have you) is putting down social and colonial unrest and intervening in the internal affairs of other countries, if necessary by armed force and at the risk of starting a world war, in order to prop up or restore to power the defenders of the old social order."

The state of mind engendering this syllogism, which is the crazy intellectual and moral foundation of Anglo-American policy, reflects the necessities of latter-day capitalism. The arms race and the cold war will in the end be suicidal for humanity. But in the meanwhile they are essential to the survival of so-called free-enterprise society. For the arms race is its economic prop. And the cold war engenders the political atmosphere in which alone its defenders can cling to power.

The life or death question is whether most of the people will stay fooled all the time on this issue, or whether enough of them will wake up before it is too late. I am glad to report that over here in Britain, not to mention France and Germany, a certain restiveness is growing. And my thanks to Mr. Dulles, for no one has done more than he to open people's eyes to the sinister and at the same time ineffably silly realities of Anglo-American official policy.

SOCIALISTS AND ELECTIONS

AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

The following exchange of letters between Leo Huberman and Joan R——, a long-time MR subscriber on the West Coast, is self-explanatory.
—THE EDITORS

Dear Leo Huberman:

I am somewhat troubled and concerned about some aspects of the coming election campaign and, in that connection, about some of your remarks in your speech at the Debs memorial meeting in New York last November, printed in the January MR. You mentioned in that speech "the fruitless debate between those who would dabble in the internal politics of the capitalist parties, and those who would use up our time and energy in the creation of an independent—not plainly socialist—party which hasn't the slightest chance of success." Don't misunderstand me: I am much inclined to agree with you. But where does this leave us for practical purposes in the election campaign? It seems to me that this needs much further elaboration and discussion on your part in MR in plenty of time before the actual election campaign begins (which should include some of the major primary campaigns).

Perhaps you feel that there is a difference between actively working in the campaign and simply doing one's duty as a voter, and this is a compromise I have to a lesser or larger extent practiced during the last few campaigns. But it is not a very satisfactory compromise. I am sure you agree at least to the extent that no one's vote should be lost through abstaining from voting. In fact, to impress this on voters is one of the major purposes of the campaign efforts. And even though many of the same evils are inherent in the two major parties (which is, of course, the main reason for feeling unable to participate wholeheartedly and with a good conscience in the campaign) there is unquestionably still some difference in some areas between the two parties (as you have pointed out yourself in MR not so long ago, if I remember correctly).

I participated heart and soul in the Roosevelt fourth-term election campaign which was immediately after I had become an American citizen, feeling as I did overwhelming gratitude for being able to vote at least once for FDR. Today, I can't bring myself to work wholeheartedly and with a good conscience for and within the Democratic Party. This, at times, makes me feel almost guilty, especially since quite a number of my friends work with all-out efforts for the

Democratic Party, despite the fact that they basically think very much as I do. They explain that this is the only way to insure that more liberal candidates will be nominated, and this reasoning is very difficult to refute. In fact, their work is probably all the more essential in our particular Congressional District since this is the District of Donald Jackson of Un-American Activities Committee ill-repute, and strong efforts to replace him certainly cannot lightheartedly be brushed aside. Yet I feel there is not the slightest chance to change the party as a whole to any appreciable degree, no matter what efforts we exert, and so I remain, partly out of indecision, on the sidelines, making a compromise by at least being a member without participating actively, so that they should have the financial and numerical benefit from membership at the state convention of the California Democratic Clubs where essential policy matters will be decided, including endorsement of a candidate for Senator from California to oppose Senator Kuchel. This does not mean that I have altogether given way to mere apathy or to defeatism, for I am active in many ways where I feel that work can be done to bring about better legislation. I only remain somewhat aloof from party politics proper.

I imagine that this must be a problem with which many on the Left wrestle, seeking to find some kind of satisfactory answer, and it is for this reason that I am hoping you may find it possible to give room for a thorough discussion of the complex problem in MR.

With cordial greetings,

Joan R——

Dear Joan:

Let me begin by stating that in this reply to your letter I am addressing myself to the problems you pose only as they relate to convinced socialists—those who believe in public ownership of the means of production with comprehensive planning for the benefit of the producers.

The fact that every four years, when election time rolls around, this group engages in a fierce discussion of what to do—whether to vote for “the lesser evil” or to set up a third party—is an indication that we have forgotten the fundamentals of socialist thought. This “problem” has been answered repeatedly in socialist literature. Here, for example, is what Debs had to say on the question of “the lesser evil”:

The Republican and Democratic parties or, to be more exact, the Republican-Democratic party, represent the capitalist class in the class struggle. They are the political wings of the

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capitalist system and such differences as arise between them relate to spoils and not to principles.

With either of these parties in power one thing is always certain and that is that the capitalist class is in the saddle and the working class under the saddle.

The vote on the natural-gas bill proves, if further proof is needed, that this analysis is as true today as it was in Debs' day. The bill could not have passed in the Senate without the large number of Democratic votes—many of them "liberal" Democrats.

I have before me, as I write, a copy of the great socialist classic, *Merrie England* by Robert Blatchford. It was published in this country by the old *Appeal To Reason*, in 1903. Note the date. Over 50 years ago, the imbecility of socialists' voting for candidates of their class enemy was exposed in these words:

To be a trade unionist and fight for your class during a strike, and to be a Tory or a Liberal and fight against your class at an election is folly. During a strike there are no Tories or Liberals amongst the strikers; they are all workers. At election times there are no workers; only Liberals and Tories.

During an election there are Tory and Liberal capitalists, and all of them are friends of the workers. During a strike there are no Tories and no Liberals amongst the employers. They are all capitalists and enemies of the workers. Is there any logic in you, John Smith? Is there any perception in you? Is there any sense in you?

You never elect an employer as president of a Trades Council; or as chairman of a Trade Union Congress; or as a member of a trade union. You never ask an employer to lead you during a strike. But at election times, when you ought to stand by your class, the whole body of trade union workers turn into blacklegs, and fight for the capitalist and against the workers.

So much for voting for the class enemy—be he a "liberal" Republican or a "progressive" Democrat.

You say "there is unquestionably still some difference in some areas between the two parties." Sure there is. The Republicans are bigger crooks; but at the moment they are split in two, the Knowland group actively (and dangerously) pro-war, the Eisenhower group still seeking to attain capitalist domination of the world but aware of the dangers of war. The Democrats, on the other hand, are not split at all in their campaign for more military expenditures. If you prefer being robbed to being killed, vote Republican; if you prefer taking the risk of survival in a war to being robbed, vote Democratic.

Stop and think for a moment. Wouldn't you agree that whatever differences may exist between the two parties fade away in the light

of the problems that face both Republicans and Democrats as representatives of the capitalist class? Aren't they both confronted with identical lines of action that are *forced* on them by the historical situation? Isn't it a current complaint among Democrats that in regard to social welfare, the Republicans are stealing their stuff? Aren't both meeting the farm problem through subsidies of one sort or another? Isn't the program of both to bolster up the economy through government spending? Isn't the goal of both to harness the labor movement to the chariot of industry (with the current crop of labor leaders vying with each other only as to who will be the first to put the bit in his mouth)?

The truth is that whatever room for maneuver there once was has practically disappeared: both political parties must attempt to solve the long-term problems that face our country in the same way—and both must fail in the end. They must fail because the problems of monopoly power and overproduction and imperialism are inherent in the capitalist system to which they cling. The long-term problems can be solved only through the introduction of those necessary changes in the social structure which spell socialism.

It follows from this that working within the Democratic Party to "insure that more liberal candidates will be nominated" makes no sense because even if successful, it would achieve nothing basic. You can have a 100 percent victory everywhere in the nation and your "liberal" Democrats elected to office could do nothing to break out of the capitalist straitjacket in which they are encased.

And how often have we found in the past that "liberal" candidates, once elected, are no longer liberal! Your friends think it is important to unseat Donald Jackson of the Un-American Activities Committee. But wasn't Congressman Doyle, also of California, supported by the Left? And didn't he end up on the Un-American Activities Committee? Down how many blind alleys, how many times, is it necessary to mislead our ranks before we wake up?

I come now to the question of a third party. Such a party, campaigning on a platform of socialism, not reform, not "progressive capitalism," makes sense because it enables us to tell the truth. Such a party has a clear-cut objective which it realizes will take a long time to achieve. It wants to grow, of course, but it can take the election returns in its stride because it doesn't expect to win the election. The campaign is an opportunity to educate people—and the party "wins" if it succeeds in doing just that.

But a third party which is not clearly socialist has no reason for existence. It promises friendship to the working man—but so do the capitalist parties. Unlike a frankly socialist party, it is organized to compete for votes and political power. It attempts to be a mass

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party. Such a party cannot survive a crushing electoral defeat because it stands exposed as a mass party—without any masses.

What, then, are we to do? I gave my own answer in my speech at the Debs memorial meeting. I said we must “speak out honestly and clearly for what we stand for. Let us proclaim—and teach—our socialist faith; anywhere and everywhere, to the many or to the few.”

I realize that that doesn't seem like an *action* program because so many of us on the Left have been led to think of action only in terms of ringing doorbells, distributing leaflets, and mimeographing literature in behalf of a particular candidate. But what I suggest is *action*, too—not so obvious perhaps, not so easy, but much more important and lasting. And it's much more difficult than the other kind of action, because it means you have to study hard and think clearly so you know what you're talking about well enough to convince the uninformed. You have to work out a technique for uncluttering and clarifying the minds of people who have been poisoned for years by lying capitalist propaganda. It ain't easy, believe me.

It will be difficult to convince the diehards on our side that this is a program of action. For them, you yourself have given an additional argument—you say you are “active in many ways where I feel that work can be done to bring about better legislation.” That's very important. For the person who wants to *do something* now in addition to preaching socialism, there is much that needs doing on every front of daily life. Are you rightly infuriated at the horror of the Emmett Till murder? Are you incensed at the injustice done to Miss Autherine Lucy? Then you can work hard and long for the NAACP. Are you concerned about the preservation of our traditional freedoms? Then you can find much that needs doing in such organizations as the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee in the East, or the Citizen's Committee to Preserve American Freedoms in the West, or the American Civil Liberties Union. Are you worried about the dangerous role being played by George Meany in respect to foreign policy? Then you have a job to do with the members of your own trade union. Are the schools in your neighborhood on a double shift, the buildings unsanitary, the teaching poor? Then the Parent Teachers Association is in need of your help. Does the community in which you live lack a suitable playground? Then you can speak up in your community organization if one exists, or start one if there isn't any.

Plenty of action, plenty of practical day-to-day work everywhere around for anyone who wants it—without wasting time and energy working to elect Democrats who don't stand for what you believe.

How shall we vote? The dilemma here is that none of the existing socialist parties in the United States adequately fills the bill. The

Socialist Party is socialist in name only—it fights socialism where it already exists. The Communist Party says it advocates socialism, but for many years now it has been active only in pushing for reforms; and currently it argues for the senseless, suicidal program of working inside the Democratic Party. The Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party advocates socialism, but in an unrealistic sectarian way with all its energies focused on attacking Stalinism. The De Leonite Socialist Labor Party advocates socialism—its own peculiar, narrow, sectarian brand—and takes a lofty, unrealistic attitude toward day-to-day problems. But since I have firmly decided that I will not vote for a capitalist candidate, I shall have to choose from among the four socialist parties—however unsatisfactory the choice may be.

A college student came in to see me the other day. He was a Catholic, very rich, a member of the ruling class. He told me how a year ago he had been converted to Marxism by listening to a clear, carefully reasoned explanation of the inadequacy of American foreign policy given by a classmate in a bull session in his dormitory. "All at once," he said, "as I was listening, everything that was unclear became clear; a veil was lifted from my eyes. Ever since then, I have been reading and studying Marxist literature. When I have learned enough, I will take my place in the ranks of those who are helping to bring socialism to the United States."

Then, with his eyes flashing, as he paced nervously across the room, he asked, "How was it possible for me to have lived to the age of 25 without ever learning the truth?"

I pointed out to him that this was not as strange as it seemed. Where was he to learn the truth? From the Church? From the upper-class society to which he belonged? From school? From the press and radio?

In the absence of a powerful socialist movement, how do any of us become socialists? Through a friend, a teacher, a book, or an experience in which there is an illuminating flash—and when it comes, in Debs' phrase, it is "like passing from midnight darkness to the noontide light of day."

Today, when the Left is weak and crumbling, when only a fool thinks we can exert any significant influence on American politics, surely our only course is to do what we can do—to spread the gospel of socialism. If we who believe in socialism don't do it, who will? If socialists work actively for Democrats, who will "lift the veil" from the eyes of those who "live to the age of 25 without ever learning the truth"? What is more "practical" in an election campaign, or any other time, than giving to everyone we know the key to an understanding of our complex world?

Near the end of his short book, *This Misery of Boots*, published

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in 1906, H. G. Wells asks the same question you ask. Here is the question and his answer:

What are we to do? Obviously to give our best energies to making other people Socialists, to organizing ourselves with all other Socialists, irrespective of class or the minor details of creed, and to making ourselves audible, visible, effectual as Socialists, wherever and whenever we can.

We have to think about Socialism, read about it, discuss it; so that we may be assured and cleared and persuasive about it. We have to confess our faith openly and frequently. We must refuse to be called Liberal or Conservative, Republican or Democrat, or any of those ambiguous things. Everywhere we must make or join a Socialist organization, a club or association, or what not, so that we may "count." For us, as for the early Christians, preaching our gospel is the supreme duty. Until Socialists can be counted, and counted upon by the million, little will be done. When they are—a new world will be ours.

I think that what H. G. Wells said in 1906 is as true today, a half century later. Let us dedicate ourselves to the inspiring task of bringing about a genuine revival of socialist thought and socialist faith in a country that is losing the habit of thought, and sadly in need of a faith.

Fraternally,
Leo Huberman

P.S. There is what seems to me to be a disturbingly large number of radicals in this country who are, or have been on the psychoanalyst's couch. I know little about the subject and I may be way off on this, but it does seem to me at least possible that one of the reasons is that so many left-wingers believe one way, and act another. That *must* be unhealthy. What a lift to the spirit one gets when he thinks and says and does what he truly believes!

The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society.

—James Madison, *The Federalist* (No. 10)

The working man is often wrong, but his is always the right side.
—Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1888

FROM PARIS TO PEKING TO NEW YORK

BY PAUL M. SWEEZY

Joseph Starobin's *From Paris to Peking* (Cameron Associates, 1955, 280 pp., \$3.75) is a good book. It also raises many questions, both explicitly and by implication, which are of vital importance to the American Left. My purpose here is not to review the book in the conventional sense of the term but rather to set down some of the impressions and thoughts to which it gave rise in the course of two readings. If I write frankly of matters that are ordinarily reserved for private discussion—if indeed they are talked about at all—it is because Starobin seems to me to be inviting such frankness and because I think the time has come to say out loud some of the things that many people are thinking.

From Paris to Peking is a sort of cross between a travelogue and a personal journal, a genre which American newspapermen have made familiar enough in recent years. In parts, it follows closely the pattern set by Starobin himself in his 1954 work *Eyewitness in Indo-China*, which was largely a work of straight reporting. But there is something else here which is not so easy to describe accurately—questioning, speculation, self-examination are all involved. And the recurrent theme might be said to be “home thoughts from abroad”: What does it mean to be an American in the world today? What is the relevance of events in France, Italy, Russia, China, to the United States? How is American radicalism to overcome its present crisis? How can Americans use their own past to build a better future? In its preoccupation with these questions and problems, *From Paris to Peking* bears comparison with the late F. O. Matthiessen's *From the Heart of Europe*, about which the author wrote in the Preface: “This is less a travel book than a journal of opinions, a record of what I thought about during half a year abroad. It is as much about America as about Europe.”

To raise these questions is a recurrent necessity, and when it is done as thoughtfully and effectively as Starobin does in this book we should be grateful. At the same time, I think it is fair to say that his own answers, to the extent that one can use the term in this context, are admittedly so tentative and unformed that they can hardly provide a suitable basis for discussion as yet. And it will certainly be fairer to the author to wait for the new book promised in the last chapter (“Geneva, 1955, and Thoughts for Another Book”) which one can picture as bearing some such title as *Where Do We Go From Here?*

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But these are not the only problems posed by *From Paris to Peking*. Starobin spent altogether about a year in China in 1952 and 1953. He was thus the first American newspaperman to cover what may well turn out to be the biggest story of the twentieth century, the building of a new society in the most populous country on earth. As the correspondent of a Communist paper, *The Daily Worker*, he was received everywhere as a friend and had the kind of access to persons and places which even a *New York Times* correspondent might envy. His reporting on China, though not brilliant, is clear, interesting, and informative throughout—the kind of material which readers in the United States have not been able to get anywhere else. As straight newspaper work, in short, *From Paris to Peking* is fully up to accepted professional standards, and it is unique in giving an American's first-hand account of the new China. On logical and rational grounds, one might think that the book would have been eagerly bought and read and discussed.

Actually, I know of no evidence that it has been noticed outside left-wing circles, and even there its reception seems to have been no more than what might fairly be described as routine. The very first question the book raised in my mind was this: why does a good piece of work on a vitally important subject with no rivals whatever to compete against—why does such a book meet with such a wretched reception in the United States today?

Some of the reasons are obvious. The commercial press boycotts the left press authors as a matter of deliberate policy, and the American reading public has for the most part been successfully conditioned to believe that the writings of radicals couldn't be any good anyway. But there is unquestionably more to it than that. The fact is that a large part of the Left itself—my own guess would be a substantial majority—expects little if anything from books by Communist writers and buys them (to the extent that they are bought) only out of a sense of duty to keep the dissenting press alive.* Why should this be so? This is a question, I submit, which is of crucial importance to the entire Left, Communist and non-Communist alike. It concerns our most important and difficult problem, that of re-establishing communication with the American public at large.

There is no space for a detailed answer, but I think the main elements are clear enough. From long experience, we have come to expect certain highly standardized qualities in the works of Commu-

* Starobin explains in a footnote (p. 14) that he has not been associated with the *Daily Worker* since early 1954, and there is not the slightest doubt that in this book he speaks for himself and not for the paper or the Communist Party. At the same time, there has apparently never been any question of a break, and his general viewpoint remains the same, so that it is obviously right to regard him as a Communist writer.

nist writers. Let me list a few: (1) Given the subject matter and a general knowledge of the Communist line at the time the work happens to have been written, we pretty well know in advance what it is going to say. (2) Facts and analysis are manipulated to give the desired results; they are not combined in a serious intellectual process of searching for the truth. (This does *not* mean that the results may not be perfectly valid; often they are. Nor is there any implication that Communists have a monopoly of this procedure: very far from it.) (3) The author assimilates his mental and emotional reactions to certain accepted stereotypes, thus washing out his own personality and with it much of his capacity to evoke or hold our interest. (4) The style is generally repulsive: over-writing, jargon, endless attribution of bad motives to opponents; these are a few of the commonest faults.

This list is far from complete, but it is enough to account for the upshot: what we expect to get from Communist books is boredom and irritation; what we do *not* expect to get is new knowledge and understanding.

Having said this, I must immediately qualify it. There have always been many exceptions. The writings of the Communist leaders, those who make the party line, have a special interest and importance. Artists of stature—in this country as well as abroad—have stood out against the general trend. In France and Italy, some of the very best historians (and Franco-Italian historiography is probably the best in the world) have been and are Communists. And so on. What's more, all indications point to a general and marked improvement in the world Communist movement as a whole. This picture, in other words, is by no means all black, and the prospects for the future are excellent.

Unfortunately, however, none of these qualifications apply to the United States. Here the trend has been one of steady deterioration. Communist writings display all the typical weaknesses in exaggerated form; those who are supposed to be the leaders are as dull and mechanical as the party hacks; with one or two possible exceptions, there are no longer any Communist artists of stature; and the general level of work in the fields of criticism and social science has surely reached an all-time low. To mix a metaphor, a new book by a Communist writer in the United States comes into the world with two strikes against it; even if it is a good book like *From Paris to Peking*, its chances of getting to first base are small indeed.

If this explanation of the reception of Starobin's book makes sense, it raises two further questions: Why has the trend in American Communism been counter to that in the international movement as a whole? And given the circumstances outlined above, how can we

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explain the fact that a good work like *From Paris to Peking* gets written at all?

It might be thought that a sufficient answer to the first of these two questions can be found in the repression of the last few years. I have no doubt that this is a factor of decisive importance, but I do not think it is the whole story. The repression was bound to have a shock effect on American Communism, but is it not conceivable that the outcome might have been a re-examination of the past and a new start on a surer footing toward the future—a realization of the “better smaller but better” slogan once put forward by Lenin under adverse conditions, rather than defeat and disintegration? This, it would seem, is the question which really needs answering.

Like many other people, I have puzzled over this long and often, and I do not pretend to have any final or satisfactory solution. But I have come to one conclusion—or perhaps I should say hypothesis—which I think throws light on the problem and which seems to be confirmed rather than discredited by the disproportionately high quality of Starobin's work.

It has often been observed that the Communist Party, unlike the old Socialist Party of Debs' day, never really sank its roots in the American soil. There are, I suppose, two main reasons for this: first, the ethnic composition of the country at the time of the Russian Revolution ensured that the movement inspired by that event would be under predominantly “foreign” leadership; and second, the unique strength of American capitalism ensured that radicalism would remain a peripheral movement in the United States long after it had moved to the center of the stage in most of the rest of the world. A peripheral movement under “foreign” leadership was always in danger of becoming a mere sect, cut off from the mainstream of American life, and indeed this has been characteristic of American Communism for most of its lifetime. There was one period, however, when conditions were particularly favorable to radicalism and when the special virtues of Communists—the capacity for hard, disciplined work and the willingness to forego personal reward for the sake of a cause—gave them a unique opportunity and importance in the American labor movement. They played a role of historic importance during the depressed 30s and doubtless were on the way to sinking roots in the American soil, to escaping from the isolation which their “foreignness” had imposed upon them. But the process was a slow one, and it was certainly not speeded by the many habits learned or borrowed from more successful Communists in other parts of the world. And it was stopped by wartime prosperity and then reversed by the combination of continued prosperity and witch hunt in the postwar period.

This was essentially the situation when the repression rose to its

apex in 1948 and subsequent years (the first Communist indictment under the Smith Act may be taken as a turning point). American Communists, far from constituting the deep-seated and diabolical conspiracy pictured by scribes and pharisees of the ruling class, were virtually defenseless against the onslaught. The average American, not understanding them and feeling no natural solidarity with them, was easily conditioned to hate them; and all too many of the hundreds of thousands who had been in and out of the Party during its heyday needed no conditioning. *The old isolation was intensified to the point where American Communists became in effect exiles in their own country.*

This, I suggest, is a key to much that has happened (and not happened) during these years. Political exile is a very old phenomenon, and we know a good deal about it first and last. Its victims typically lose touch with reality and regress in their thoughts and fantasies to earlier and happier days. Just as the German exiles in London and New York after the defeats in 1848 continued to imagine that a new revolutionary wave was just around the corner, so the Communist exiles in the United States after 1948 have cherished the hope that a new Great Depression and a new New Deal were in the immediate offing—and this time they, the Communist Party, would take up where they left off last, leading a great popular coalition to victory. The ideas and propaganda designed to bulwark these hopes have become increasingly thin and shrill, the disillusionment and quarrels stemming from continued frustration increasingly bitter and envenomed. The whole movement, smitten from without, cut off from the nurturing support of popular confidence and respect, falling apart within, has declined steadily until today one can hardly speak any longer of a "movement" but only of the disjointed remnants of a movement.

This analysis, if valid, accounts for the fact that American Communism has been going in the opposite direction to world Communism. But it also suggests the reasons for the freshness and vitality of *From Paris to Peking*. For most of the postwar decade, Starobin has been a foreign correspondent, at first largely in Latin America and then from 1948 onward in Europe and the Far East. While his comrades at home were sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of domestic exile, he who might at first glance be regarded as the true exile was traveling around the outside world where exciting things were happening and new ideas were developing, both in and out of the Communist movement. Being an observant and thoughtful person, Starobin learned and changed and grew in this favoring environment. In the process, quite naturally, he increasingly lost contact with the situation at home ("I guess you are just out of touch with things,"

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he quotes his 13-year-old son as saying to him over the transatlantic phone in 1952). And when he did finally return, he was able to produce work of a kind and quality that had long seemed beyond the range of American Communism—work which combines straightforward reporting, a capacity to see the world as it is, and an undogmatic search for new answers to new questions.

It will be interesting to see whether American Communism can assimilate, or even tolerate, work of this kind and the attitude from which it stems. More than that, it will be a kind of test of the movement's ability to understand, and perhaps eventually to begin to cope with, its present crisis. On February 12, 1851, Engels wrote to Marx:

One can see more and more that exile is an institution in which everyone must necessarily become a fool, an ass, and a common scoundrel unless he completely withdraws from it and contents himself with being an independent writer who takes no notice of the so-called revolutionary party.

Will United States experience a hundred years later show that this is equally true of "domestic exile"? I don't know the answer, but I suspect that it may be revealed in the fate of Joe Starobin. American Communism may borrow some good habits from abroad for a change and provide the kind of framework within which American radicals like Starobin can continue to grow and seek answers to the unanswered questions that face us all. The other possibilities are that exile will make a fool of him too, or that he will carry on as an independent writer the good work he has been doing in the last few years.

A NEW LOOK AT CHINESE HISTORY

BY ARTHUR K. DAVIS

Part 2

Our aim in this paper is to outline a view of Chinese history that accords with the facts better than the prevailing Western conception does. The latter stems from the limited experience of the

The second of a two-part article. Professor Davis is a frequent contributor to MR.

past century, when China was weak, backward, and forcibly opened by and for Western exploitation. During most of history, however, China has been not only a great state, but a leader in science and civilization. With the recent consolidation of the Communist regime, China has resumed her normal Great Power status. We believe that this event, like the Russian Revolution, is a decisive turning point of world history. The two revolutions, really chapters of the same worldwide industrial revolution, indicate that the mainstream of man's social evolution has now entered irreversibly upon its socialist phase.

Perhaps human society will yet be wrecked by the suicidal schemes of irresponsible Western leaders. Barring that catastrophe, the next age of man is already unfolding in Eurasia. As we work toward socialism ourselves, we must study its origins and development elsewhere. In the first half of this article (MR, February 1956) we suggested that this can be effectively done, in the case of China, by viewing the latest three epochs of Chinese history as *thesis* (the 2000-year Feudal Bureaucratic Empire), *antithesis* (the Foreign Imperialist Interregnum, mid-19th to mid-20th C.), and *synthesis* (Socialist Industrialism, mid-20th C. ff.). Having already discussed the first, let us proceed to the second.

Antithesis: The Foreign Imperialist Interregnum

We feel that this term best sums up the last century of Chinese history, from the Anglo-French opium wars of the 1840s and 1850s to the unsuccessful American intervention of the 1940s and 1950s. During that period, the dominant social process in China, which all others had to adjust to or take major account of, was surely the aggressive invasion of foreign capitalist civilization—not simply political and military but also technological and intellectual. That several foreign powers, including Japan and the United States as well as the European states, were active in this invasion at different times does not alter the general picture.

The broad result of the era was the crumbling of the agrarian feudal society and the introduction of new social elements. Of itself, it brought no stable reconstruction. It was a time of troubles, of chronic unrest and occasional upheaval—a revolutionary interim between major historical epochs.

The conventional view of Western bourgeois historians terminates the Chinese Empire and begins the Revolution in 1911, when the Manchu Dynasty finally gave way to Sun Yat-sen's Republic. It sees the culmination of the Chinese Revolution in the Nationalist uprising of the mid-1920s under Chiang Kai-shek. We disagree with this superficial view. It obscures the basic social processes, both

Chinese and worldwide, instead of revealing them.

The essence of the Chinese Revolution is the replacement of the locally self-sufficient agrarian economy by a centrally planned, world-oriented industrial economy. This means the transformation of all aspects of social life. As a long stretch of ferment, beginning perhaps in the 17th century, preceded it, so an indefinite time of consolidation lies ahead. But the more violent upheavals attending this social revolution appear to have been concentrated, barring another world war, in the hundred years just passed. The industrial way of life first came to China by force from without. Independence was lost, and had to be regained.

In the 19th century, Western capitalism was aggressively expanding, and Chinese society was in one of its periodic phases of internal decay. The stage was set for foreign imperialism. Agrarian China could not cope with the superior economic, military, and political technologies of the West. British factory-made textiles, for instance, could undersell Chinese homespun in China. A major prop of the peasant economy—handicrafts—was thus badly damaged. Political and religious imperialism followed these economic inroads. Mao Tse-tung states that feudal China's slowly growing market economy "would have developed into a capitalist society even if there had been no influence of foreign capitalism. The penetration of foreign capitalism accelerated this development . . . because it destroyed the foundation of her self-sufficing natural economy and disrupted her handicraft industries in both the cities and peasant homes, and it accelerated the development of commodity economy in town and country." (*Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 77.)

Later in the interregnum, two new processes emerged organically from world capitalist society: the intensification of international war, and socialism. These developments ultimately enabled China to escape from imperialist domination. Her captors cut each other down in two world wars. Japan finally expelled the European powers from China, and America defeated Japan. Meanwhile Russian socialism showed the way to rational mastery of the new economic techniques for the general welfare.

Settlement of China's century-long crisis required the regaining of independence and the carrying through of drastic reforms toward socialism. Slowly pressures toward these two ends grew, at first unsuccessfully, as in the 1900 Boxer outbreak, then inadequately in the Nationalist rising of the mid-1920s. Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang failed because it fought against reform and not against Japanese aggression, by far the worst of the entire interregnum period. Independence and reform proved to be inseparable. Rejecting one, Chiang lost both. China recovered herself only when the Communist move-

ment united all classes in the 1940s for full independence and complete social reform.

During the interregnum China took on the typical features of economic colonialism: foreign domination of strategic economic sectors, such as modern industry and transport, banking and foreign trade; rural stagnation and overpopulation; a luxurious upper class and poverty-ridden masses; and a conspicuous lack of the diversified investment, mass education, and other assets necessary for general industrialization. Until the 1920s the Chinese tariff was set and managed by Westerners!

For a century, foreign powers dominated China, both indirectly through a series of weak native regimes and by occasional surges of direct action. In 1860, and again in 1900, Western forces seized Peking and dictated conqueror's terms. In the 1930s, Japan helped herself to several provinces. But in the late 1940s and 1950s, the intervention of the mightiest capitalist nation was decisively repelled. Though foreign imperialism may remain an important pressure in Chinese affairs, it can no longer dominate them. The interregnum has ended. A new historical epoch has begun. Antithesis has given way to synthesis.

The Taiping Revolution

The rest of this paper deals with a little-known phase of the early interregnum. The Taiping state is important because its impending victory in civil war led directly to hostile Western intervention, and because it was the first chapter of the modern Chinese revolution.

About 1850, revolt broke out near Canton. It was a peasant rising, a response to a half century of growing tyranny, economic disasters, famines, Manchu decadence, plunder, piracy, and foreign defeat. Disorder pervaded China. Not only was the outbreak a typical rebellion seeking to replace a hopelessly incompetent dynasty. It was a revolution looking toward major changes in the traditional social order. Its ideology included a vigorous homespun version of Protestant Christianity mixed with Confucian elements. This was the only occasion when anything resembling Christianity won a mass following in China, doubtless because it was a *native* prophetic movement.

Like the Communists of a later day, the Taipings developed superior military organization and tactics. Following a long march northward, they established the Taiping, or "Great Peace," kingdom with Nanking as its capital. At one time or another they controlled much of central and south China. The revolutionary State was not

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suppressed for fifteen years, and then only by foreign intervention. Estimates of all fatalities run as high as twenty million.

Clearly this was a social upheaval of the greatest magnitude. Yet most Occidentals have never even heard of this epic event. Could there be a more dramatic proof of Western insularity?

Bourgeois historians usually belittle the Taiping movement as foredoomed to failure by its own weaknesses. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* account by K. S. Latourette of Yale says, "[The Taipings] showed an utter lack of ability to organize their conquests."

But a fresh review of the matter suggests that this is a distorted verdict. Compared to their Manchu foe, whose degeneracy is attested by all concerned, the Taipings were a progressive force. They reduced taxes on the oppressed peasantry, redistributed land, notably improved the status of women, restored order, and vigorously combatted bribery and opium. They ended the use of legal torture in judicial proceedings, regularized the calendar, and introduced a colloquial literary style. Their fanatical assaults on Buddhist idolatry hit hard at religious superstition, a bulwark of mass docility (because of its other-worldly preoccupation) and therefore a mainstay of gentry class rule.

At least around Nanking, the Taipings practiced a form of theocratic socialism. Units of 25 families worked their land together and pooled their crops and handicrafts in a common treasury, distributed according to need, with the surplus belonging to the community. Pyramided like an army, these units carried out the major economic, civil, military, and religious functions. The military officers were also the civil and religious leaders. There were serious but sporadic efforts to determine leadership by merit. In their mass printing and study of the Bible, the Taipings showed tendencies toward popular education.

As they became more aware of the outside world, the chiefs reacted favorably to the idea of Western technology and trade, but only on the basis of equality, without extraterritoriality. In certain respects, especially where knowledge of alternatives was lacking, they manifested retrogressive feudal patterns—nepotism, royal pageantry, religious escapism, harsh punishments. They had no comprehensive awareness of their social situation, such as the industrial experience of the West was then making available in Marxism.

Yet their natural posture was indisputably forward leaning. A contemporary British traveler pictured the Taipings as "a clever, candid and martial people, rendered peculiarly attractive by the indescribable air of freedom which they possess." In the Manchured areas he noted "dull apathetic countenances, without expression or intelligence . . . their energies seem bound, their spirits crushed

by oppression." (A. F. Lindley, *Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh*, London, 1866, p. 67. Incidentally, the late General Stilwell was a great admirer of this book.)

Counter-revolution: Western Style

Several factors contributed to the Taiping defeat. Among them were failure to concentrate their forces against the Manchu capital, lack of a united front with other anti-Manchu but non-revolutionary rebelling groups, the divisive effects of surviving local and clan loyalties, and the tendency of religious fanaticism to obscure political realism. More important, probably, was the violent internal schism of 1856, which seems to have lopped off much of the radical and realistic wing. Little is known for certain, but nepotism and religious obscurantism seem to have been considerably strengthened after the purge. Yet the regime soon produced new and very able leaders who could again inflict great defeats on the Manchu forces. And Lindley's firsthand comparison of the Manchu and Taiping sections of the Yangtze valley in 1861 clearly shows the social and economic superiority of the latter. (*Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh*, Vol. 1.)

The bourgeois theory that the Taipings fell because of their internal weaknesses does not carry much conviction in view of the even greater Manchu failings. Let us suggest instead that the productive and defensive and communicative techniques and social organization needed to stabilize the new order were not available to a pre-industrial and practically preliterate peasantry surrounded by hostile and far more powerful industrial nations.

For what really tipped the balance against the Taipings was the intervention of the British and French (especially after 1860) with their vastly superior military technology. What use were Taiping spears and matchlocks against Armstrong-Vickers cannon?

Why did the Western powers intervene? Because of their vested interest in a weak, corrupt, and opium-besotted China. Profits, power, and social reaction molded the coalition of Manchus, Chinese gentry, and Westerners against the revolutionary Taipings.

Western capitalists sought to expand their trade with the Chinese. By far the most profitable item was the smuggling of opium from India, where it was produced under government auspices, into China. Although imperial decrees forbade the import and use of opium, Chinese local officials were easily bribed. The opium trade became a prime source of the Indian government's revenue. Moreover, opium was the only product that could be sold in China on a wide enough scale to pay for Britain's purchases of Chinese tea. The tea trade was another huge vested interest, both in terms of profit to English importers and in terms of revenue to the British Crown.

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After the 1830s opium smuggling into China by Western merchants became so extensive that it caused a large drain of Chinese silver to India and a disastrous inflation in south China. This greatly intensified revolutionary conditions, as Marx pointed out in one of his brilliant New York *Tribune* articles in 1853. (*Marx on China*, London, 1951, Ch. 1.)

Although pre-industrial China's trade was well developed, it operated within local, clan, and traditional controls, dominated by the provincial and district mandarins. There was no nationwide standardized tax system, market, legal code, or coinage. The West's depersonalized capitalism, confined to one or two ports, therefore met with innumerable "squeezes" and restrictions. So the British, seeking new trade outlets, picked a suitable occasion in the early 1840s for a short and successful war. They repeated the performance again in the late 1850s with French aid. Western armies seized Peking, razed the priceless Summer Palace as an object lesson, and dictated terms which legalized the opium trade, broadened extraterritorial concessions, imposed an indemnity, and set up a Western-staffed tariff system wholly favorable to the West.

"No right-thinking foreigner now wished to support the Taiping cause," as the scholarly S. F. Wright, a former Commissioner of the China Customs Service, so candidly puts it. (*Hart and the Chinese Customs*, 1950, p. 147.)

Having plucked these choice plums from the helpless Manchu regime, the Europeans then intervened against the Taipings. British and French warships and troops went into action; Manchu armies were transported on the Yangtze; supplies and arms were issued; militia forces were imported from the Philippines; contingents of Chinese soldiers were trained and led by white officers. Among the latter were Frederick Ward, an American freebooter, and Charles Gordon, an English artillery major. European cannon beat down Taiping city walls, and Manchu soldiers butchered civilians by the thousands.

Familiar pattern, isn't it?

Even the handful of Christian missionaries, with a few exceptions, tacitly joined the counter-revolution against the Taipings. More than one Protestant parson acted as intelligence agent, and a Catholic priest was killed in action while leading a Filipino militia detachment. At first very sympathetic to the Taipings, most missionaries were alienated when they discovered that the new movement insisted on its own prophetic inspiration and interpretation. The Taipings welcomed exchanges with missionaries, but refused their leadership. That the Chinese should deal directly with God, and vice versa, was inconceivable to the Westerners. So the religious imperialists,

somewhat reluctantly, climbed on the interventionist bandwagon.

This uneasy alliance of native reaction and foreign imperialism was in effect a united front against the Chinese people. It stifled China's first modern revolution and made possible the gradual partitioning of her empire. Within a generation or so of the Taiping defeat in 1865, Britain annexed Burma, France seized Indo-China, Japan took Formosa and Korea, Germany began on Shantung, and Russia on Manchuria. And let us not forget that America's allegedly altruistic "open door" policy in China was simply an imperialist version of "me too."

Let us observe also the demonstrated futility of seeking social reforms within China's traditional social structure. From Tseng Kuo-fan (leader against the Taipings) to his ardent admirer Chiang Kai-shek, "reform within the existing framework" has been a professed aim of many native and foreign opponents of China's various revolutionary movements. It is still American policy in Southeast Asia and in the Point Four idea. But it is a contradiction in terms. A viable industrial order cannot be grafted onto a pre-industrial class and political structure.

An English Civil Servant on Chinese Rebellions

In 1856, an able analysis of the Taiping uprising was published by a British Civil Service interpreter stationed in China. This was Thomas Meadows' *The Chinese and their Rebellions*, recently reprinted by Academic Reprints (Stanford, n.d.). Besides being a noteworthy contribution to historical scholarship, this work influenced the development of the British Civil Service and was an important stimulus to Tolstoy's profound interest in China during his later years. Meadows had a rare ability to discern deeper historical trends beneath surface events. His book was written, first, to lay bare some basic social forces in Chinese history; and second, to warn the Western powers, in the light of his analysis, against intervening in China's internal affairs. It succeeded in the first aim but failed in the second. Let us quote some key passages, abridged from Chapters 2 and 20:

The Nature of Dynastic Authority. "The successor to the throne is not considered by himself or by others the [legitimate ruler] unless he gives peace and plenty to the empire. The disasters of war, pestilence and famine are but ways by which Heaven declares that the occupant of the throne is not its chosen representative, or that he has ceased to be such. All nature animate and inanimate is based on the principle, the 'way of Heaven.' So long as the occupant of the throne rules with the rectitude and goodness which are the chief features of this law, both man and nature gladly submit, and peace and plenty prevail. When he

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violates this law, the passions of man and the powers of the elements alike break loose. Rebellion is the legitimate means of stopping vicious legislation and administration." Formosa and the China Lobby, please copy!

That Meadows was basically correct in his understanding of pre-industrial China's rebellion cycle and in his perception of the corrupt Manchu Dynasty's imminent collapse is clear. But he did not realize that the Western impact would preclude restoration of the traditional order, nor that the Taipings were challengers rather than rebuilders of the old empire.

Meadows' Advice to the Western Powers. "Disinterested interference of one nation with another has never yet taken place. But we are being summoned to interference with the Chinese in the cause of humanity and civilization. All interference is bad; unsuccessful interference is the least bad. When put an end to by the final success of the party which it opposed, an internally very strong government is the certain result. If the interference is successful, the certain result is a weak government—a cowardly, vicious and cruel government. In this volume it has been shown that periodic dynastic rebellions are necessary to the well-being of China; that the nation is well aware of the political functions of its rebellions; and that it respects successful rebellions as executions of the Will of Heaven, operating for its peace and prosperity. Will not the reader freely pardon me, if I have been unable to repress a somewhat bitter expression of the feelings I entertain for all attempts to urge or entrap the maritime powers of the Occident into a coarse physical repression of the Taiping rebellion?"

Surely this is one of the most perceptive passages in all political literature. Did not the successful Western interference of the 1860s produce a weak and vicious Chinese government? And did not the unsuccessful American intervention in the 1940s and 1950s facilitate the emergence of a strong Chinese regime?

Judging by present-day American parallels, we might expect Meadows to have been sacked—or worse—for telling his government some unpalatable truths. Not so, however. Imperialism a century ago was expansive and self-confident; today it is neither. Meadows was promoted to Consul and stationed at Shanghai; by 1864, he was at Newchwang in south Manchuria. This transfer to the far provinces seems to have been the extent of his punishment. He continued to refute the official slanders against the Taipings and to criticize European interference even after intervention was well under way. Small wonder that his imperialist-minded colleagues considered him "impracticable and mischievous." (*Hart and the Chinese Customs*, p. 214.)

Compare the cases of Service, Vincent, and Davies, recently hounded out of the American Foreign Service. Or consider Owen Lattimore, a target of official persecutions for several years. No one familiar with Marxism would classify these men as Marxists. But they could recognize that the Kuomintang was bankrupt and on its way out. Their basic crime was an ability to face this fact. In 1944, J. P. Davies wrote to the State Department from Chungking: "The Communists are in China to stay. And China's destiny is not Chiang's but theirs." (*United States Relations with China*, Department of State, 1949, p. 573.)

Should Americans become generally aware that Chinese Communism grew out of native resources and old-regime corruption, that it has unified China into a great power, and that the Foreign Imperialist Interregnum is therefore ended, the ground would be cut from under the present United States policy of intervention against the revolutions in Asia by whatever means our own people and our allies can be persuaded to accept. To protect that policy and the murky interests it serves, people like Lattimore, who tell much truth about China, are sealed off from public opinion by governmental smears and official persecutions.

Imperialist aggression against China, by force and by alliance with weak native reactionaries, has seldom been due to *official* ignorance. From the beginning to end of the Foreign Imperialist Interregnum, the aggressor nations have had at their disposal excellent analyses of Chinese affairs. *Popular* ignorance about China, carefully fostered by official propaganda and by indirect ruling-class control of communication and education, has always been an essential condition of Western imperialism. Certain elements in our ruling circles, it seems, do not trust their interests to an enlightened democracy. How else, except in terms of a conflict between the interests of ruling capitalist groups and the interests of the common man, can we explain the glaring discrepancy between the facts about China which our government receives (or could receive if it had not deliberately fired all its competent Far East experts) and the parochial tripe concerning China which it hands out?

Imperialist aggression against China could not be ended until the Chinese were strong enough to repel it by force. No amount of window dressing can obscure that historical fact. We therefore face the disastrous prospect of continued imperialist activity by American capitalism until all other colonial areas are similarly closed. But is there no alternative policy? There is indeed. Not Point Four: the impossibility of grafting an industrial economy onto a pre-industrial social order has been demonstrated more than once in this magazine. The sole practical alternative is for Americans to reorganize their society along socialist lines. "Socialism is the only answer."

THE NEARINGS' USA

BY ALEXANDER L. CROSBY

Some of my liberal friends are irritated by Scott Nearing. A former political science professor went so far as to challenge the reliability of his scholarship. The gentlemen of the orthodox Left are also disturbed. After listening patiently while one of the latter explained the necessity of working in the Democratic Party "to reach the masses," Nearing pointedly asked, "Why don't you join the Catholic Church? That's where the masses are."

Those who are actually to the Right and those who are nominally to the Left of Scott Nearing are troubled because he gives them no ground for comfortable compromise. He would sooner use a commercial fertilizer on his Maine farm—where he practices organic gardening as the Pilgrims practiced religion—than make any expedient deviations from his fundamental beliefs. A polite young man from the State Department learned this lesson a few months ago when he talked with the Nearings about their application for a passport. The State Department man had a report that Nearing had once addressed a California meeting "in Communist Party headquarters." Was this true? "No," said Nearing, "but I would have spoken if I had been asked."

In *USA Today*,* Scott and Helen Nearing make a forthright report on everything from teen-agers and timber to automation and the ubiquitous FBI. No recent writer on the state of the nation has approached their thoroughness in groundwork. From October 1952 to May 1955, they spent 16 months on three cross-country trips. They drove more than 50,000 miles through 47 states, held some 600 meetings and talked to about 30,000 persons. Most of the gatherings were held in private houses. There are very few cities where any critic of the American way of life can hire a hall or attract an audience.

This book is a brilliant and highly readable study of America's present, with a glance at its recent past and a look to the future. It is a shocker. Any citizen who wishes to keep his complacent faith in the goodness of General Motors and the wickedness of socialism

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* Helen and Scott Nearing, *USA Today*; Social Science Institute, Harborside, Maine, 1955; 288 pages, \$2.25.

should burn *USA Today* quicker than he could say John Foster Dulles. If he dared look inside he would discover, for example, that his faith had been shaped and implanted by the propaganda apparatus of the nation's rulers, an apparatus that the Nearings call "less adroit than the British and far less crude and crass than that of the Nazis, but for technical efficiency and breadth of coverage . . . out in front of both." The seven components of American propaganda are listed as the family, the school, the church, the government, commercial advertising, the press, and pictorial presentation. The product is uniform throughout the nation.

The Nearings found that the people of the United States are devoted to physical sensations: eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and noise. But supermarkets, super-sex life, and super-entertainment haven't produced happiness. The people are "obsessed by anxieties and fears, gripped by tensions, baffled by confusions and contradictions, plagued by uncertainty, and by a pervasive sense of insecurity."

There is good cause for economic insecurity, the authors maintain. As the rich accumulate more and more profits, the gap between total production and consumer spending broadens. It was \$25 billion in 1929, \$45 billion in 1941, \$135 billion in 1953. This is the road to depression, but the crash has been postponed by the spectacular rise in government spending. Natural resources are being squandered. Farmers are paying more and earning less.

Politically, the nation is moving toward the pattern of a fascist society, the Nearings say. They define fascism as "that stage in the development of a capitalist community at which the holders of power consider it necessary to abandon all pretense of *laissez faire*, and to consolidate, in the hands of one self-perpetuating, profit-seeking group, control over the economy, politics, the military, and the apparatus of public information and communication." One sign of the fascist trend is the suppression of minority parties in what was once a free political market. Indeed, a younger generation is reaching voting age with little or no experience in free-market politics—but with a fearful conviction that the less said about public questions, the healthier for one's career.

The family background of today's children is alarming. "Among the many homes we have visited there was not one in twenty in which the children bore a simple, natural, harmonious, adjusted relation to the household," the Nearings observed. American parents have failed their young by accepting the shibboleth that "the child knows best."

What is the cause of what the authors diagnose as the social cancer of the United States? Like Germany, Italy, and Japan, this country passed rapidly from a rural-village-use economy to an industrial-urban-market economy, and in the process "the social balance

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was so explosively modified that the community having lost its equilibrium, staggered and plunged from one excess into another." In Britain, France, and Holland, however, "the bourgeois transformation matured slowly over several generations."

"Uncontrolled competition, acquisition, and violence, which are the Holy Trinity of the American-way-of-life, will eat out the social fabric of any community which permits them to exist, because they will eventuate in the elevation of the military to the position of policy-arbiter," the authors warn. "Since the purpose of military strategy and tactics is the destruction of property and life, militarism ends by consuming all who practice it."

On the Eisenhower Administration, the Nearings give the President credit for blocking the warmakers in his own party. But for the first time in United States history Big Business is openly shaping the nation's policies. It has formed a "United Front from the Right" that has paid its managers and technicians well, allied itself with labor officials, won control of farm organizations, and sold the public on the virtues of the American system. "If there have been a few master artists responsible for the general direction of the policy, they would include Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford, and Franklin D. Roosevelt," the authors say.

The domestic success of the oligarchy has not been matched by international achievements. Contrary to what every school child knows, the United States is not leading the world: "The USA is playing the same regressive or retrogressive role, in the mid-20th century, that Tsarist Russia played in the 19th." The worst failure is cited as the racist approach to Asia, a blunder compounded by monumental errors in strategy, such as blind loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek, the separate treaty with Japan, the forlorn Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, and the American walkout from the Indo-China peace negotiations. The Asian blunder "typifies Washington's approach to international problems, the approach of the braggart and bully. Such an approach attracts jackals and repels lions. It wins Washington a few sycophants and alienates the bulk of the world."

The United States, with one-sixteenth of the world's population, has classified two-fifths of mankind as its enemies, the Nearings point out. "The USA oligarchy is running a race with time—with history, a race that it can win only if it is able to restore capitalism on one hand and contain and restrict Communism on the other," they continue. And in this endeavor the chief obstacle has been, ironically, the only other great capitalist power, Britain, which prefers to stay alive and do business with everybody.

The American policy is "the real threat to the peace and happiness of mankind," the book declares. It is "a conspiracy by one

rich, powerful nation, its allies, dependencies, and mercenaries, to rule the majority of the human race, with soft words and phony arguments if possible, otherwise with nuclear bombs. Nor need we go further in search of explanations for the world-wide growth of anti-Americanism. From all accounts this anti-Americanism is more in evidence among the allies and dependencies of Washington than in countries of the enemies which it is proposing to incinerate."

The drive of the American oligarchy to create a militaristic nation of servile conformists is meeting resistance, the authors report, although the dissident minority is weak and disunited. Americans don't want war and they don't want regimentation. "The war danger, more perhaps than any other factor, has galvanized American resistance into activity," the Nearings believe. Other factors are listed as economic insecurity, discrimination, the invasion of privacy by police, and the idealization of greed.

The tide is turning, the book concludes, although Mr. Dulles may be the last man to notice it. When former Secretary of State Marshall talked about restoring Europe to its once dominant position,

He might as well have attempted to restore windblown autumn leaves to the branches where only yesterday they hung green and sturdy. . . . Secretary Dulles is equally blind to the nature of the social crisis through which the world is passing. Like his predecessor, Dean Acheson, and also like the legendary King Canute, he bids the tide of collectivism to rise no higher, on pain of atom bombing; commands the winds and tides of history to stand still, as a red stop-light halts on-coming street traffic. . . . History may describe the 1946-55 years as a decade devoted to testing the USA capacity for leadership. The erratic, irrational, and unprincipled handling of domestic and foreign affairs by the United States oligarchy alienated and alarmed Washington's closest allies and provided its enemies with a wealth of propaganda material.

Americans who remember clearly how Hitler created a Communist bogey to seize power may hesitate to draw, as the Nearings do, the inescapable parallel. This is still a free country, isn't it? Just a minute: How many book reviewers have written objectively about *USA Today*? How many radio commentators have found it quotable? How many government officials would let a copy be seen on their desks? How many teachers would recommend it to their students? Name just one.

A nation's morals are like its teeth: the worse they are decayed the more it hurts to touch them.

—Bernard Shaw

WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

"To Equal and Excel"

Chiefs of state, meeting at Geneva, in July 1955, agreed that a war with atomic weapons would be suicidal and therefore undesirable for both sides. This is military stalemate—two "positions of strength" from which neither can gain advantage by using the strength it has developed.

Thirty years ago, when Soviet spokesmen, from a position of extreme weakness, launched a drive, in Lenin's phrase, "to equal and excel" the West, westerners chuckled and sneered. But in the summer of 1955, the Soviet military position was so nearly at par with that of the West that, by common consent, the two stood at the same level of effectiveness. In this important military area of competition, the Soviet purpose "to equal" had been realized. Western chiefs of state recognized this fact in Geneva by agreeing to co-exist.

Having won such substantial equality in the military field that they no longer feared the outcome of attack and invasion, such as they had suffered in 1918-1921 and 1941-1945, Soviet leaders turned their energies to equality in economic and cultural affairs. Throughout the ensuing six months, in one field after another, the West has found itself challenged, equalled, or excelled.

Take the matter of skilled managerial personnel as an example. It was during 1955 that Westerners suddenly "discovered" that Soviet higher educational institutions were graduating more than twice as many scientists and engineers as the like institutions in the United States. This example of Soviet "excelling" was a surprise, even to careful Western observers. It was also shocking to the point of dismay because the scientific and engineering staff is by common consent the key to industrial success.

Could the Soviet Union match this skilled technical leadership with the natural resources, the capital equipment, and the manpower necessary to "equal" in industry as it had already equalled in military striking power? Over the year's end, the new Soviet Five Year Plan was launched with the declared purpose of equalling the United States economically, in certain fields, by 1960. The new Plan gave a detailed Soviet program to lead the world in production and in standard of living.

Whether it is worth while to "equal and excel" the West in its own chosen field of gadgetry is a matter which is causing grave concern to many thoughtful men and women on both sides of "the curtain." But emphasis on material well-being is a legitimate form of competitive co-existence, and the Soviet authorities propose to have a go at it.

Soviet ambitions to demonstrate equality with the West, if not superiority over it, also turned to politics. Through decades, Soviet political influence had been narrowly restricted. In the United Nations, for instance, on sharply defined issues, the West could muster forty or fifty votes to five or six for the Soviet bloc. Explosive changes in Asia after 1945, coming to a head in the Bandung Conference of 1955, gave the Soviet Union its opening. The key issues at Bandung were: an end of colonialism, and world peace preserved by a strengthened United Nations. In December 1955, while Soviet spokesmen were making speeches on these problems in India and Burma, their diplomatic conferences were helping to engineer a package deal under which sixteen nations were admitted to the UN, shifting the balance of power in that organization to the Bandung bloc, to which the USSR was proposing to extend political protection as well as economic and technical aid. A few weeks later, Soviet Premier Bulganin proposed to extend Soviet trade and aid to Latin America, where the United States has held a large share of economic control and a virtual monopoly of political influence.

Trivial though it may seem at first glance, an interesting example of equalling and excelling was brought to public attention by the current winter sports Olympics in the Italian Alps. On January 22nd, Robert Daley reported preliminary trials for the 500-meter skating event which was considered the likeliest one for a United States victory. At the 1952 Olympics, in Oslo (where the Russians did not participate), two United States skaters, Henry and McDermott, had finished first and second.

Daley wrote in the *New York Times* (January 23, 1956): "Two Russian speed skaters bettered the existing world record for the 500-meter sprint in Olympic practice at Lake Misurina today. A third Russian tied the mark. . . . The best any United States athlete could do today was fourth."

What had happened between 1952 and 1956 that shifted supremacy in an athletic event from the United States to the Soviet Union? Ken Henry, United States speed skater, who had won in the 1952 Olympics and had skated in the world championship races in Moscow last year, gave Mr. Daley the answer. "There are two outdoor speed tracks in America. But McDermott, John Werket, and I found there were fifty-five tracks in Moscow alone, with 10,000 registered speed

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skaters." Henry stated that Soviet skaters practiced the year around. He added: "A Finn won the 500-meter race last year, with a Russian named B. Shilkov second. A proof of Russian strength is that Shilkov couldn't make their 500-meter team this year."

Soviet sports leaders have developed speed skaters by providing the opportunity for speed skating and by making it possible for thousands to go in for the sport. With such a formula they are bound to bring to the surface whatever talent and genius is available.

By January, 1956, the Soviet program for equalling and excelling the West had won a permanent place on the front-page of Western news-sheets. At point after point—military, economic, political, cultural—Soviet competitors were demonstrating their excellence.

"Panic" is the Word

Spokesmen for United States capitalism have expressed an anxiety bordering at times on real alarm over the series of events following the Geneva Conference last summer. Many of those who visited the Soviet Union in the late summer and autumn were surprised and disturbed by what they saw there. Expecting a raw, backward, impoverished country, they found themselves in a purposive beehive of modern science and industry.

The rude awakening of these visitors was described by Canada's Foreign Minister Lester B. Pearson, who visited not only the Soviet Union but also Southeast Asia. Mr. Pearson referred to his Russian experience as "ten days that shook Pearson." "My abiding impression," he reported "was of massive power, massive strength, great collective wealth and of inflexible purpose." Furthermore, the Canadian Foreign Minister said that perhaps the revolution he saw going on in Southeast Asia was more important than the one he had seen in Russia.

Tumultuous ovations for Soviet spokesmen during their December, 1955, tour of India and Burma stunned many informed Western observers, who had no idea of the extent to which Soviet achievement had impressed Asian neighbors who, until a few years ago, suffered and struggled under the heel of Western imperialism.

The sale of Czech arms to Egypt and the Soviet offers of technical assistance to Asian and African countries were followed, in mid-January, by the establishment of diplomatic relations with Liberia, and by Soviet proposals to trade and improve diplomatic relations with Latin America. This was the last straw. Soviet economic and cultural influence was penetrating to the frontiers of the United States!

All through January a new note of anxious alarm appeared in the public pronouncements of Western spokesmen. Was there anywhere that Soviet representatives would not go? Was there anything

that they could not and would not try to do? In a lead editorial on January 18th, headed "Red Bid to Latin America," the *New York Times* urged its readers to keep their heads. "The United States cannot allow itself to be panicked by these tactics," the editors wrote. "The worst mistake we could make would be to get frightened."

The *Times* has picked the right words: "fright" and "panic." Ever since 1917, that paper and other agencies of public information have misinformed the people of the United States about the revolutionary forces sweeping East Europe and Asia, proclaimed the superiority of the "American way," and taught fear and hate of Russia and latterly of China. Today, the facts are penetrating even the dollar curtain of censorship, hush-hush, and misrepresentation as the collective world manifests and demonstrates its massive power, massive strength, great collective wealth, and inflexible purpose to destroy the last vestiges of economic exploitation and colonialism and open the doors to a future of peace, abundance, order, and decency based on collective effort.

Can Capitalism Take It?

Economic and cultural competition between capitalism and collectivism was brought to the center of the world stage by a series of events over the year's end. United States spokesmen have played their cards with more than \$50 billion of foreign aid during the past decade. Soviet representatives in India, Burma, Afghanistan, and Egypt have entered the field with proposals for technical assistance financed by barter agreements under which the Soviet Union will absorb the surpluses of rice, cotton, and other commodities held by Asian-African nations.

During January, the extent and timing of foreign aid became one of the major issues debated between the Republican administration and leaders of the Democratically-controlled Congress. The discussion ranged beyond politics in the crucial question: "Can capitalism survive this round of struggle in the economic and cultural field?"

Solemn warnings came from capitalist spokesmen as they scanned the 1956 economic horizon. Geoffrey Crowther, editor since 1938 of the London *Economist*, and one of the most widely quoted capitalist authorities, answered the question "How long will world prosperity last?" in an article by that title in *Look* magazine for January 24, 1956, by guessing that the post-war boom has passed or is passing its peak and that "1955 will turn out to have been the banner year."

United States delegates to the United Nations faced the question

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of economic and cultural co-existence in a statement which carried the approval of the President and Secretary of State. Mr. Dulles read this document at the opening of his Press Conference on January 11, 1956.

"Economic and social questions are assuming increasing importance in the international scene," the statement noted. "The present period in history may one day be recognized as a major turning point in the struggle between communism and freedom [capitalist imperialism]." In the United Nations and elsewhere, the Soviet Union is "using economic and social collaboration as a means for jumping military as well as political barriers. . . . We are in a contest in the field of economic development of under-developed countries which is bitterly competitive. . . . We could lose this economic contest unless the country as a whole wakes up to all its implications."

On January 16, in its lead editorial entitled "A Challenge from Moscow," the *New York Times* noted that economic competition extended beyond the matter of aid to underdeveloped countries:

In its sixth Five Year Plan, published in Moscow yesterday . . . Moscow seeks to prove that its totalitarian economic system can out-produce free economies. The new plan is intended to demonstrate that "in peaceful economic competition, in the shortest historical time," the Soviet Union can overtake and surpass the most developed capitalist countries—the United States in particular—on the basis of per capita production. To the hundreds of millions of people living in undeveloped countries throughout the world, Moscow seeks to show that its system can assure a prosperous future in the shortest possible time. . . . Knowing the Soviet challenge, the leaders of our economic life must now know that continued swift progress here at home is the only answer.

Foreign aid was the subject of the first editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* of January 16, 1956. How helpless we are! exclaimed the editor. The proposed Egyptian dam will take perhaps fifteen years to build. "Who knows what the government of Egypt will be like even five years hence? What if it is a government inimical to the United States? . . . World conditions can change suddenly." Actually, the editorial continues, economic aid will not win the contest. "If aid was the determining factor, the United States should have won out long ago, with the fifty-odd billions allocated to foreign countries since the war. We can spend billions more and still lose the real contest. For if we show the world that we are so lacking in self-confidence that we must compete with the communists on their terms, we will surely lose the respect and confidence of the world."

These utterances can leave no question in the mind of any ob-

jective observer. The voice of capitalism quavers with fear and trembles in panic. In the opening weeks of 1956, capitalist spokesmen admitted that the survival struggle between capitalism and collectivism has reached a critical stage, at which capitalism could lose the contest.

Dilemmas of the West

President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Eden, representing the two wealthiest and best-armed among the Western nations, met in Washington at the end of January. After a three-day conference, on February 1, they signed a statement and a "Declaration," in which they proclaim "the right of peoples to governments of their own choice"; report that "600 million men and women in nearly a score of lands, with our support and assistance attained nationhood" in the past decade; declare their intention to increase international trade and promote economic progress; denounce the "Communist rulers" for their intention "by every possible means" to extend communism until it encompasses the world; warn that "any free nation that may be persuaded by whatever threat, promise or enticement to embrace communism will lose its independence"; pledge themselves to seek "a just and lasting peace" and universal disarmament, but insist that "meanwhile the society of free nations must retain the power needed to deter aggression." Thus, conclude the British Premier and the United States President, "We shall help ourselves and others to peace, freedom and social progress."

This is an undistinguished statement of platitudes and good intentions, whose luster is marred by historical inaccuracy.

At no point does it face up to the foreign aid dilemma analyzed by the Editors of *Monthly Review* in the last issue. At no point does it so much as mention the basic historical dilemmas which confront the West. First, between peace and war: to keep the peace and survive, temporarily, or to go to war and suffer a speedy and violent death. A second, more fateful dilemma, between using atomic energy to pile up wealth and power for the few or to provide abundance and well-being for the many. A third dilemma involves the choice between the continued domination of the earth by a Western minority, using wealth and military might to enforce its decisions, and a much empowered United Nations, making and enforcing its policies on world problems. Fourth, there is the contradiction between a privately owned, competitive, profit economy and a socially owned, collective, planned economy for use. These dilemmas, presented to the West by its own historical development, were ignored by the writers of the inconsequential Declaration of Washington.

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(continued from inside front cover)

MR, I went to our local library [Santa Monica, California] today to inquire about *The Empire of Oil*. When I couldn't find it in the index I went to the order desk, gave them full particulars and requested that they order the book." (January 16.) "I just inquired and prodded the library again re *The Empire of Oil*. Naturally, they have not ordered it so far, but promised again to let me know further about it, and I will keep inquiring." (January 24.) "I was just called by the library, and I think you will be pleased to hear that they told me they would order *The Empire of Oil* after February 15th. I am really happy at this result!" And so are we. Let other readers note that there is no patent on this sure-fire method of happiness-making.

Another method of promoting *The Empire of Oil* is suggested by a letter from a subscriber in Kitchener, Ontario: "It might interest you to know I found *The Empire of Oil* so interesting and informative that I wrote four leading Canadian daily newspapers letters for their public forums, drawing attention to the book and declaring it 'must' reading for all parliamentary representatives, editors, school teachers, service station operators, and interested citizens."

One final note in this connection: Very favorable and generally excellent reviews of *The Empire of Oil* have appeared in *The Nation* of February 4 (by Professor John Ise of Goucher College, himself a distinguished expert on the oil industry) and in *The National Guardian* of February 6. You can make good use of these reviews in calling people's attention to the book.

Mr. C. Desmond Greaves, editor of *The Irish Democrat* (53 Roseman St., London E.C.1, England) writes us that he is working on what he hopes will be the definitive biography of James Connolly, the great Irish labor leader, and that he is very anxious "to secure the fullest details of his lecture tours, etc., in the USA from 1907 onwards. I know he was in Massachusetts and in Kansas City and on the West Coast, also (I suspect) in Colorado; but I have no idea what he was doing there or exactly what were his relations with the IWW." Any MR readers who can help Mr. Greaves out should get directly in touch with him. We have already written him that we have a considerable number of old-time socialists among our readers and would not be at all surprised if some of them had had personal contacts with Connolly when he was in this country.

As we go to press, the Clinton Jencks case, one of the most scandalous and, as precedent, potentially dangerous of the witch hunt cases, is being appealed to the Supreme Court. This case involves the meaning of Communist "membership" and "affiliation" under the Taft-Hartley Law, and also the use of paid informer testimony (in this case publicly repudiated by the informer himself, Matusow). If Clint Jencks goes to jail for five years, as he is now sentenced to do, not only will a vile injustice have been perpetrated but the personal security of every radical and dissenter in the country will be threatened. For full information on the case, write to Mine Mill Defense Fund, I.U.M.M.S.W., Box 98, Bayard, New Mexico, and do what you can to publicize the facts in your own organizations and locality.

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